funding under National Oilseeds Development Project and to be equally shared by the Centre and the State for the development of coconut.

Schemes for development of coconut are being implemented through Coconut Development Board and the Central Government do not administer any scheme for assistance direct from the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Therefore, comments of the Board were sought on the Operational Plan prepared by Government of Kerala.

Board while commenting on the components of irrigation, yield potential, improved dry farming techniques, plant protection measures on root wild disease also indicated that Board was not consulted in drawing up the project and that the project submitted by the Board viz. "Integrated Farming in Coconut small holdings in Kerala" was more viable and production oriented.

Thereafter, Government of Kerala was advised on 9.5.89 that it would not be possible to provide assistance for coconut under National Oilseeds Development Programme/Oilseeds Production Thrust Project. They were also advised to consult/associate the Board in the formulation of a project on coconut.

Thereafter, no Project has been received from the Government of Kerala.

Kerala Project as a Part of Konkan Railway Project

534. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Kerala project would form part of the Konkan Railway schemes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Railway Industrial Project in Kerala

535. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have not located a single major railway industrial project in Kerala;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to set up any such major industry there in the immediate future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir; though no major railway industrial project has been located in Kerala, rail transport demand is being looked after by new lines, doublings and various other improvements.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Recognition to coconut as oilseed

536. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received any request for recognising coconut as an oilseed; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Exploitation of Bidi workers

537. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bidi manufacturers are not paying wages to their workers for the rejected (chaant) Bidis, the sale of which

values to about Rs. 50 lakhs per day; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to stop exploitation of bidi workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) : Information regarding sale value of the rejected (chaant) bidis and payment of wages therefor is not available.

In a meeting recently convened by Ministry of Labour in which representatives of the State Governments, employers and employees participated, it was decided that the Bidi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Rules should be suitably amended to make provisions for return of rejected bidis to the workers free of cost. The State Governments were advised to bring about requisite amendments in the respective Bidi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Rules.

The Bidi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Amendment Bill, 1990 introduced in the Rajya Sabha, *inter-alia*, provides for the expeditious settlement of disputes relating to rejection of bidis.

Increase in the price of rice being supplied through PDS

538. SHRI M. M. JACOB: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of rice supplied through the public distribution system has been increased recently; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b) The Central issue price of rice of all the three varieties viz. common, fine and superfine supplied through the public distribution system has been increased by Rs. 45/- per quintal from 25-6-1990 to absorb the increase of Rs. 25/- per quintal in the support price of paddy made from 1-10-1989, which, on an average, results in an increase of Rs. 47/- per quintal in the levy price of rice after taking into account out turn ratio of rice from paddy, procurement incidentals etc.

Price Index

539. SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what had been the wholesale price index during the last three years in the month of June, year-wise figures;

(b) whether it is a fact that wholesale price index have reached the highest during June, 1990; if so, what steps are being taken by Government to contain this price rise;

(c) whether Government propose to appoint a study team immediately to suggest ways and means to check inflation in the country; and

(d) if so, by whem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b) : The All Commodities Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for the month of June, 1990, June, 1989 and June, 1988 are as uder:

June 1990	—176.1
June 1989	—162.0
June 1988	—152.2

Government has accorded highest priority to check the rising trend in prices of essential commodities Both long-term and short-term measures are being taken for the purpose. The measures taken by the Government broadly include steps to increase the production of essential commodities which are in short supply; effective procurement and buffer stocking